

Indiana

Paths to Quality

Standards for Participation

Licensed Child Care Home

Licensed Child Care Home Level 1

Level 1 Licensed Child Care Home Providers will be able to:

- Meet minimum health and safety standards
- Develop and implement basic health and safety policies and procedures.

Licensed Child Care Home Providers meet the standards for a level 1 rating providing the following are met:

- 1. The license issued by Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), the Division of Family Resources (DFR) is current and in good standing.**

Licensed Child Care Home Level 2

Level 2 Licensed Child Care Home providers will be able to:

- Provide an environment that is welcoming, nurturing, and safe and promotes the physical, emotional, and social well-being of all children.
- Provide a variety of learning materials that reflect the age, interests, and abilities of each child.
- Provide for children's language and literacy skill development.
- Provide pertinent program information to families.
- Promote assistant caregivers' development and training.

Licensed Child Care Home providers meet the standards for a level 2 rating providing the following are met:

1. All requirements of Level 1 are met.
2. Lead Caregiver receives orientation and training assistants on the *Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children, Birth to Age Five*.
3. Lead Caregiver is a member of a nationally recognized early childhood organization.
4. Child care home has a written philosophy and goals for children.
5. Lead Caregiver will have a current CDA or equivalent certificate, OR an early childhood degree or equivalent degree OR have completed 45 clock hours of educational training in early childhood education within the past three years leading to a CDA or an early childhood/ child development degree.
6. At least 50% of caregivers, including the lead caregiver, annually participate in a minimum of 15 clock hours of educational or in-service training focused on topics relevant to early childhood annually.
7. A system is in place for communicating pertinent information to families, daily and at an annual family conference.

8. A written emergency plan is established and implemented. The plan is shared with parents at the time of enrollment and/or any time the provider initiates a change in any aspect of the plan. The purpose of the written emergency plan is to make all emergency policies and procedures clear to parents. The plan is to be signed by the parent(s) to indicate their understanding and acceptance of the policies and procedures. The written plan will include:

- The procedure for notifying parents in the event of the provider's illness, the illness of a member of the household who may be contagious to others, or any emergency that prevents children from being cared for in the provider's home.
- Any back-up plan for care that the provider will arrange in the event of an emergency.
- The need for the parent to have a back-up plan for care in place, in the event of their child's illness or the provider's inability to care for children.
- Exclusion policies pertaining to a child's health.
- Alternative contacts and medical care authorization available in case parents can not be reached in the event of an emergency.
- A list, provided by the parent(s), of people authorized to pick up a child.
- A plan for fire evacuation or any other type of evacuation.
- A plan for safe shelter during a tornado warning or any other threatening weather emergency.

9. Written policies and a child care contract is established and implemented with families. The contract should be signed by the parent(s) and should contain:

- Persons authorized to pick up a child
- Illness policies, including reasons for exclusion
- Guidance and discipline policy
- Medication administration procedure
- Written emergency plan
- Policy regarding parent conferences, visits and open door policy
- Information on transportation and field trips
- Hours care is provided
- Late pick up policy
- Payments and fee schedule
- Vacation policies for both provider and family vacations
- Sick leave policies for both provider and children's illness

- Alternate care/substitute policies
- Termination policy
- Child information including any special needs, fears or food preferences/allergies

10. The home is welcoming, nurturing, and safe for children to have interactions and experiences that promote their physical, social, and emotional well-being. Indicators include:

- Each child and his/her family are warmly acknowledged upon arrival and departure.
- Each child feels safe, accepted, and protected. This is supported by guidelines that reinforce respect for people, feelings, ideas, and materials.
- The environment includes representation of each child and family (including all age groups, abilities, and cultures), such as books, pictures, photographs, music/songs, games, toys, dress-up clothes/materials, and foods.
- Each child's individuality and cultural background is valued and respected by the caregiver.
- A place for storage of personal belongings and possessions is labeled with child's name.
- Caregivers communicate with and listen to children (both verbal and non-verbal messages) with lots of one-on-one attention throughout the day and usually at eye-level, including time when the caregiver is down on the floor with the children.
- Children's ideas, requests, and questions are acknowledged with a verbal response or physical gesture.
- Children's feelings are acknowledged with an accepting, non-critical verbal response or physical gesture.
- Caregivers refrain from negative verbal or physical responses to children at all times, such as yelling, criticizing, scolding, threatening, sarcasm, name calling, yanking, pinching, squeezing, or spanking.
- Destructive or disruptive behavior is addressed with children (face-to-face rather than from a distance) by the caregiver, explaining the effect of the behavior, stating the desired behavior and redirecting or helping the child make alternate choices.
- Although limits/consequences exist, the caregiver refrains from too many restrictions in the environment and rarely uses "no", except in dangerous situations.

- Conflicts are resolved by/with children through a problem-solving approach (acknowledge feelings, listen to children share what happened, ask for ideas or solutions, and follow through).
- The caregiver plays interactive games, and sometimes joins in children's play, expanding upon their ideas.
- The home is generally characterized by varying sounds or comfortable conversation and spontaneous laughter from happy, involved children and adults.

10a. Specific Infant/Toddler Indicators Include:

- Infants are frequently held, comforted when crying, and given one-to-one attention during feeding and diapering.
- Caregivers engage in many one-to-one face-to-face interactions with infants/toddlers, including singing and playful interactions.
- Caregivers acknowledge infant/toddler babblings with a verbal response, vocal imitation or physical gesture
- Caregivers engage in meaningful conversations with toddlers.
- Caregivers give toddlers simple words to use to express feelings. Verbal toddlers are then encouraged to use words in conflict situations.

11. Daily schedule provides ample time for child-directed choices with activities and materials that are geared to the age, interests, and abilities of each child. Indicators include:

- The daily schedule is consistent and predictable but relaxed and can be adapted for individual children as needed.
- Children direct their own free play (individual or group play) for at least one half hour at a time, totaling at least two hours in an eight hour day.
- Routine tasks (such as labeling, sorting, classifying, folding clothes, counting while cleaning up or setting the table) are viewed as learning opportunities.
- Transitions are generally relaxed, allowing time for play and completing activities. Idle sitting and waiting time avoided.
- Meal time is relaxed, with no scolding or nagging. Children are encouraged to sample new foods but allowed to eat the foods of their choice.
- Nap time is relaxed with alternative quiet activities available for the non-nappers. Individual napping schedules are respected for infants/toddlers.

- The caregiver has a system for rotating toys and materials for variety so that unused toys are stored and later reintroduced.
- TV/VCR/DVD, if used, is primarily an educational experience. Caregiver discusses what is viewed with children and provides an alternative activity; OR TV/VCR/DVD is not used at all.

11a. Outdoor Play Time:

- Outdoor play is included daily (weather permitting with temperatures not below 25 or above 85 degrees). Active indoor play may be a replacement when necessary.
- Outdoor/large motor activities and plentiful play materials for a variety of skills are offered (for example, climbing, running, jumping, balancing, riding, and playing with balls).

11b. The home is arranged and utilizes plentiful materials and activities in order to provide a variety of age and developmentally appropriate interest centers that invite children's explorations. Caregivers offer a variety of at least three different types of the following activities daily from which the children may choose. Caregiver regularly rotates the learning activities.

■ **Reading:**

Books, soft, washable seating/pillows for use while reading

■ **Writing:**

Writing tools, paper, envelopes, typewriter or keyboard, letters, numbers

■ **Art:**

Drawing materials (crayons, markers, thick pencils, variety of paper, sizes and types, not coloring books or dittos/worksheets)

Painting materials

Tools (scissors, hole punch, tape), staplers for school-age children

Three-dimensional materials (play dough, clay with tools)

Collage materials (catalogs, magazines, paper scraps, fabric pieces, string, yarn, cotton balls, pipe cleaners, craft sticks)

■ **Blocks:**

Different size/types of blocks and accessories such as small people, animals, vehicles, and road signs to enhance building, sticks, stones, tape, string, craft sticks, interlocking blocks.

■ **Dramatic Play:**

Dress-up clothes (such as work boots, high heels, a variety of hats, career gear/attire/uniforms, purses, billfolds, and multicultural

outfits.) Other items would also include large pieces of fabric/scarves, child-size play furniture, dishes, pots, pans, dolls (multicultural included), dollhouse or other play-sets, accessories for dolls, and “props” for different themes.

■ **Math/Numbers:**

Small objects to count/sort/classify, measuring tools (scales, rulers), numbers/shapes, number games, puzzles and pattern blocks.

■ **Music and Movement:**

Audio equipment, variety of tapes/CDs, music boxes, musical toys and instruments, dance props such as scarves/streamers.

■ **Nature and Science:**

Collections of natural items (shells, rocks, flowers, bugs), living plants, pets to care for, science games, toys, magnets, magnifying glasses, cooking opportunities.

■ **Sensory Play:**

Water, play dough, sand, or similar material (such as corn meal, rice, beans, oatmeal), along with kitchen utensils, measuring containers, shovel, trough, buckets, small cars and trucks, and water-play accessories for pouring, measuring, squeezing, and basting.

■ **Small Motor/Manipulative:**

Blocks, puzzles, crayons, pencils, scissors, interlocking blocks and other small building toys, pegboard and pegs, games, counting materials, sorting or classifying materials and containers.

11c. Specific Infant/Toddler indicators include:

- Open spaces for exploring and protected play areas.
- Infants/toddlers will be provided with a variety of outdoor play experiences.
- Soft, washable elements, such as cuddle toys, soft furniture or cushions.
- Enough materials to avoid problems with children making the same toy choice and waiting.
- Materials are organized consistently on low, open shelves for independent use by children.
- Materials are sturdy and in good condition.
- A variety of open-ended, washable toys, such as rattles, teething/rings, balls, pop beads, nesting toys, containers, cuddle toys, push/pull toys are available.
- Low, stable furniture is available for children to pull themselves up.
- Furniture adapted for toddlers is available.

- Toddler activities include building, pretending, experiencing art materials, enjoying stories and books, playing with toys, exploring sand and water, having fun with music and movement.

12. Children are read to daily and encouraged to explore books and other print materials. Indicators include:

- Caregiver reads/looks at books with children daily.
- Books are available and assessable daily for children to look at and enjoy on their own.
- Caregiver uses books or reads with children during quiet, individual lap time.
- Children are invited to tell stories or “read” a picture book.
- Children are encouraged to explore print and writing as they scribble, invent spellings, write their name or other words, and make books.
- Caregiver writes words dictated by children as they tell a story or describe their pictures.
- A variety of writing materials (markers, child-sized pencils, chalk and board), materials to use with writing (paper, envelopes, stamps, tape, paper punch,, stickers, magazines, calendars) and toys (telephones, puppets, tape recorder, alphabet letters, flannel board) are available.
- Caregiver engages in many one-to-one, face-to-face interactions, including singing and playful interactions.
- Preschoolers are provided language materials daily, in addition to books, such as puppets, flannel boards, recorded stories and picture card games.
- Books for preschoolers include a variety of imaginative, rhyming, and informational books.
- Books for school-age children include a variety of reading levels and topics, such as adventures, mysteries, and informational books and magazines.

12a. Specific Infant/Toddler Indicators include:

- Durable books with short stories about common daily activities are available.
- Sturdy, simple books and pictures of real objects are accessible to toddlers each day to look at on their own.
- Each infant/toddler is given opportunity daily for at least one language activity using books, pictures or puppets.
- Toddlers are encouraged to scribble with crayons.

- Caregiver responds to sounds/speech, including by imitating infants' vocalization and engaging toddlers in conversation.
- Caregiver talks about objects and events that infants and toddlers experience.
- Caregiver uses books or reads with children during quiet, individual lap time.

Licensed Child Care Home Level 3

Level 3 Licensed Child Care Home Providers will be able to:

- Implement a planned curriculum that addresses the stages of child development
- Demonstrate professional growth in excess of licensing requirements
- Facilitate family and assistant input into the program.
- Actively engage in program evaluation and have an action plan for improvement
- May be working towards accreditation

Child Care Home providers meet the standards for a Level 3 rating provided that the following are met:

1. All requirements for Level 1 and 2 are met.
2. Lead Caregiver has at least 12 months experience in a licensed or Bureau of Child Care nationally recognized accredited child care setting as a child care provider.
3. Lead Caregiver will have a current CDA or equivalent certificate, OR and early childhood degree or equivalent degree; OR have completed 60 hours of educational training leading to an early childhood/child development degree or CDA credential within the past three years.
4. At least 50% caregivers, including the lead caregiver, annually participate in a minimum of 20 clock hours of educational or in-service training focused on topics relevant to early childhood.
5. Program evaluation is completed annually by families.
6. A written curriculum reflects the program philosophy and goals and is based on child development/appropriate practice.
7. Lead Caregiver demonstrates a planned curriculum that provides for the various ages, ability levels, and developmental stages of the children. This curriculum meets the following requirements:

- A written curriculum plan provides for children’s physical, cognitive, language, literacy, and social-emotional development. It includes goals for children that are consistent with the Indiana Foundations for Young Children.
- The written curriculum may be developed by individuals, providing it address the above mentioned topics, or a nationally recognized, developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Families are made aware of the curriculum of the program through parent handbooks, newsletters, orientation, and/or family meetings.
- Assistants are oriented to the curriculum. The lead caregiver plans with assistants so that the curriculum can be implemented effectively to provide support for children in their active learning experiences
- The curriculum and goals for children are reflected in everyday practice, including through daily, weekly, or monthly written lesson plans.

8. Children’s physical, cognitive, language, literacy, math, and creative development is supported. Indicators include:

- Many opportunities for communication (all ages), including sharing information, pointing out logical relationships, and encouraging children’s ability to reason, reading, and writing, (for toddler age and up) are provided throughout the day.
- Every day children have many experiences and materials to encourage imagination and creativity.
- Children’s thinking is stimulated through experimentation, exploration, and access to interesting materials and adult support.
- Displays of children’s art are available at children’s eye level and show that most art work is exploratory and unique to each child.
- Caregiver encourages language and literacy development through interactions, books, songs, finger plays, puppet play, and writing/drawing opportunities.
- Math experiences are a part of everyday activities and routines (use of numbers during meals, setting a table, during transition times, using a timer to take turns, counting who is absent).
- Music experiences include singing, creative movement, a variety of types of music, and a variety of musical and rhythmic instruments.
- Science exploration is part of daily activities (examples include collections of natural objects, living things to care for, cooking, and simple experiments).

- The daily schedule provides a balance of activities including: quiet/active, individual/small group/large group, child initiated/adult initiated.
- Infants and toddlers are not expected to function as a large group.
- Children, especially infants/toddlers, are offered a variety of sensory experiences each day.

9. Children are actively engaged throughout the day in making choices of activities and materials. Indicators include:

- Children should be given several free choice periods daily. Children's choice (individual or small group play) occurs at least one third of the time and includes indoor and outdoor play.
- The caregiver supports children's development through child observations and gathering information that is used to guide lesson planning.
- The caregiver supports children's play by providing additional materials and experiences that expand on children's interests and skills.
- The caregiver extends learning for children by talking about what they are doing and asking questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" response, such as "What would happen if...?", "Can you tell me about...?", "How could we get that to work?".
- The caregiver finds ways to help children learn skills and when they show an interest (zipping, tying, writing name).
- The caregiver takes advantage of the many natural learning experiences associated with daily life and makes "teachable moments" opportunities for learning.

10. The learning environment is developmentally and culturally appropriate and meets any special needs of the children. Indicators include:

- Children feel a sense of belonging in the home, by having a labeled space for their personal items, and a personal sleeping area.
- Children are taught to be considerate of each other's work and possessions.
- The children are taught to understand and respect others. The caregiver answers children's questions about differences in a respectful and factual way.
- All children and their families have equal opportunities to participate in classroom and program activities.

- Space is arranged to provide children of different ages and abilities access to materials and an opportunity to engage in play and projects without limitation or interference from one another.
- A plan is in place for effectively working with children with special needs, including behavioral needs and adaptation of materials and space
- The caregiver includes children in age-appropriate self-help activities, such as dressing, picking up toys, washing hands, folding clothes, serving food, and setting or cleaning up meals.

Licensed Child Care Home Level 4

Level 4 Licensed Child Care Home Providers will be able to:

- Meet the highest standards for high quality early care and education
- Assist other programs in quality improvement through volunteer mentoring

Licensed Child Care Home providers meet the standards for Level 4 rating provided that the following are met:

- 1. Program meets all the requirements for Levels 1, 2, and 3.**
- 2. Lead Caregiver has a current CDA or equivalent or ECE degree or an equivalent degree.**
- 3. Accreditation by a nationally recognized accrediting body, approved by the State, has been achieved and maintained.**
- 4. Lead caregiver volunteers to informally mentor a program at a Level 1, 2, or 3.**